



Topaz Newsletter

April 2026 Term 5



Towers, tunnels and turrets.

This Term

Dear Parents/ Carers,

This term we will create a castle and explore the towers, battlements....maybe a secret tunnel or two! We'll learn all about the different parts of a castle and describe how they have changed over time. We will be taking a trip to look at and draw some real-life castles and then build our own structures to test their strength. We'll use some traditional stories to further develop our fiction writing and create some non-fiction through information pages as well as creating our own instructions to build a lego castle.

Maps and photographs will help us learn about the tallest buildings and longest tunnels in world. We'll find out about the amazing Victorian engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel and improve our P.E skills by playing Castle inspired games focusing on our attacking and defending skills.

In our Maths learning we will be learning about length, perimeter and height, finishing with mass and weight which will fit in excellently with our topic learning too!

Key Vocabulary:

arch archer arrow bailey battlements burrow castle drawbridge fortress
keep lord throne turrets

Important Dates

TBC

Reminders

We will be reading frequently with all children throughout the week, please try to read at home and children will be rewarded in class for their home learning efforts. Books will be changed over every Friday so please make sure they are returned at the end of each week to enable this – if you require more books or further advice on reading and/or writing skills and development please just let me know.

We will continue to do Show and Tell each Friday when each child may bring in one small item to talk about (Please no valuables)

P.E days will take place on Wednesday and on Thursday during Term 5.

Please do not hesitate to use the Class Dojo app to communicate with us. We also use this app during the school day to reward the children for positive contributions which can be shared with you also. Thank you all for your continued support.



Opal



Ruby



Topaz



Quartz



Sapphire



Emerald

Did you know?

- Moats around castles prevented invaders from tunnelling under the castle walls. They also reduced the risk of fire.
- Castle battlements consisted of raised sections called 'merlons' (behind which defenders could shelter) and gaps called 'crenels' (through which they could fire missiles).
- It was harder for attackers to make round towers collapse as they had no corners under which holes could be dug.
- The toilets in castles were just holes in the floor. Waste products simply fell down chutes and straight into the moat. Yuck!
- Spiral staircases in castles were always built in a clockwise direction. Because most people are right-handed, this clever detail meant attackers going up the staircase had to use their left hand to defend themselves, giving a clear advantage to the descender of the stairs!
- The Eiffel Tower is one of the most visited monuments in the world. Millions of people climb to the top every year! The Blackpool Tower was inspired by the Eiffel Tower.
- The tallest building in the world is the Burj Khalifa in Dubai with an incredible height of 829.8 m! Wow!
- It takes 35 minutes to travel by train through the Channel Tunnel from Folkestone, in Kent, to Coquelles, in Pas-de-Calais.
- The soil that was dug out from under the sea to create the English half of the Channel Tunnel was deposited on the Dover coast to create Samphire Hoe, a park and popular fishing spot. France used its leftover soil to create a new hill.
- Arch bridges have been a popular design for 3000 years. They are very strong because the weight of anything crossing them is evenly distributed to the supports on each side.
- The Akashi Kaikyō Bridge in Japan has the longest central span of any suspension bridge in the world and took two million workers 10 years to construct!
- At over 21,000 km long, the Great Wall of China is the longest structure ever built by humans! According to legend, a helpful dragon identified the path for the wall to follow.
- The roof of the Sydney Opera House in Australia was designed to look like boat sails.
- Stonehenge is a mysterious arrangement of ancient stones thought to have been built 5000 years ago. Nobody knows who constructed it.



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What will you choose to do?

- Find out about famous engineers. Search the web and use non-fiction books to find out about their life and work. Draw a picture to show one of their most famous achievements and think about why their work was so important.
- Play a tumbling tower game such as Jenga, with your family. What are the best ways of keeping the tower upright? See if you can take some action shots or videos of the tower falling!
- Go on a bridge hunt with your grown ups around the local area, taking photographs to show your class. What types of bridge did you see? Choose the most interesting bridge and see what you can discover about it online or at the local library?
- Make a detailed diagram of a castle, labelling interesting features which might be found inside, or out. Perhaps you could find out about murder holes, garderobes or loopholes?
- Make an information book about castles, bridges or tunnels. Include downloaded images, as well as drawings and diagrams. What fascinating facts can you find out to amaze your family, friends and teacher?
- Design and create a model of a famous structure from around the world, using junk materials found at home. Will you choose London Bridge, the Leaning Tower of Pisa or perhaps the Statue of Liberty? Find a photograph of your chosen landmark to use as inspiration.
- Find, on a world map or globe, all the famous landmarks you would like to visit. Which continents are they in? How would you get there? Talk to your grown ups and explain your choices. Make a digital display showing images of your favourite places and giving information about each country or city.
- Design a fantastic new landmark for your local area! What materials would you use and what special features would it have? Think about how to make it stand out from other landmarks in the world. Plot your landmark on a map of your local area. Present your ideas to your class and perhaps take a vote for the winning design.
- Look at websites telling the story of *The Three Little Pigs*. Draw a storyboard with six or eight sections. Add captions and images which could be used to help you create a short stop motion animation. Make the animation if you have time.

